

cuanto que rompe las expectativas del lector subvirtiendo los convencionalismos habituales del relato decimonónico.

La obra, que está bien presentada, es una exploración metódica en los aspectos más formales del cuento, y supone un enorme esfuerzo compilatorio y clasificatorio, que la bibliografía recoge con esmero. El panorama de conjunto del relato breve en el marco cronológico 1890-1900 es indudablemente útil como manual de referencia, pero el afán inventarial y taxonómico que guía los cuatro capítulos dedicados a la caracterización del cuento lo truecan, en gran parte, en una aséptica guía. Como estudio, tiene el mérito de considerar las particularidades del género en relación con el medio en que se difunde, pero decepciona cuando se adentra en una caracterización del género según sus rasgos formales, después de haber establecido la radical dificultad de deslindar este género literario de otros. También se echa en falta una reflexión crítica sobre la ambigua relación de «sumisión» e independencia del cuento con respecto a los recursos periodísticos. Por ejemplo, la paradoja de que el medio periodístico contribuye al desarrollo del cuento, a su configuración como forma literaria, y también a su desgaste, resultante de una práctica reiterada e indiscriminada promovida por el mismo medio periodístico.

University of Missouri

ANA RUEDA

Camilo José Cela. *Memorias, entendimientos y voluntades*. Barcelona, Plaza y Janés, 1993, 375 pp.

A provocatively curious note concludes Camilo José Cela's autobiography. It reads: *Country estate El Espinar, Guadalajara. All Souls Day 1992, recently back from Oviedo after honoring Elizabeth Taylor and Nelson Mandela*¹. Whether or not the reference is taken seriously or in typical Celian tongue-in-cheek humor, these two world-renowned people certainly bring to mind, among other things, that vast spectrum of humanity which is very sensitively depicted in this self-proclaimed work of a master². As they champion the cause of sufferers of AIDS and victims of apartheid, Taylor and Mandela serve as timely reminders that Cela's memoirs

¹ The underlined represents the reviewer's translation, p. 348. All subsequent translations will be so indicated and will be followed in parentheses by the page number from the original text.

² Cela subtitles his book «Una autobiografía de mano maestra».

are also a personal challenge to those *dastardly people* [my polite version] *that plague every generation* (347).

Basing the title on memory, understanding, and will —those three faculties of the soul that he says he believes determine how one lives—, Cela unabashedly admits that he is neither ashamed nor remorseful about anything in his own life. He tells the reader at the onset that he himself really doesn't know what will result from his meanderings, while at the same time cautioning that he will not retell history per se, but rather simply narrate the period of his life that dates back to where he left off in *La rosa* (1959), that part of his autobiography —also entitled *La cucaña*— which deals with his early childhood. And so it is that as *Memorias...* chronicles Cela's early adolescence up to 1942 when *La familia de Pascual Duarte* was published, it forcibly includes more than one might imagine about Spain's Civil War (1936-39) and the deleterious effects it had on its citizenry.

As one might expect with Cela, what unfolds in these pages turns out to be a compendium of life stories and experiences that are intimately intertwined with numerous commentaries about many of the major movers and shakers —Franco being in the forefront— of the Spanish Civil War. Accompanying these two primary focal points are short running accounts of who was doing what in the literary milieu of Spain and Europe, in particular Nobel winners. This, in addition to the generous outpouring of personal views about everything from Franco to sex to war to value systems, creates in the reader the feeling of watching a play while at the same time being provided with all the stage directions that usually are a part of a dramatic text.

Adding even more flavor to the 47 segments that comprise the carefully controlled narrative discourse are interspersed pithy bits of advertisements for such as hair coloring and balding, nutrients, undergarments, etc., all of which afford the reader more insight into Cela's blatant disregard for rhetoric and propaganda that camouflage the insanity, cruelty, and depersonalization of a consumer-oriented society. In spite of constant pleas for indulgence because of his imperfect memory, Cela intentionally juxtaposes a meticulous rendering of saints' and calendar days —and a superabundance of other details— that form an ironically meaningless grid upon which the narration tends to have hallucinatory effects on the reader, whom the narrator never ceases to entice into partaking in the fri-

volity and paradoxically deadly serious monotony of life. What one reads, then, is indeed the prose of a master craftsman who employs simultaneously all of his well-honed narrative techniques and devices. In this way, the reader also acquires a sharper perspective on *San camilo*, *Mazurca*, *La colmena*, and *Oficio de tinieblas* 5 that Cela recalls regularly throughout his narration.

This delicately interwoven plotting produces such a richness of texture that the reader is left with a very real and deep sense for those things that have profoundly affected the author's life, namely, being a —young— soldier in Spain during its Civil War, three close encounters with death in the form of a war injury, tuberculosis, and contemplating suicide in 1941; writing as a way of life; the futility of wars of ideologies; and, lastly, Spain as reality, myth and enigma. In his own inimitable iconoclastic and oftentimes scatological fashion, Cela is able to transmit his soul-wrenching love of country while leaving no stone unturned in debunking public, church, and related mythical entities.

When all is said and done, Cela publicly exposes the unforgiveable sin of ingratitude in recounting the repulsive story of what happened with Viriato, the canary. By listing the 168 editions of *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, he also vindicates himself concerning the censors and three well-known publishing houses that refused to publish the novel. Nowhere is the balancing act of life defined more clearly than in these memoirs where life and death make for those strange bedfellows that only literature can reconcile. It's no wonder that one of the few Spanish writers that Cela continually remembers is Valle-Inclán, just as it is no surprise that Cela's last words offer the promise of finally getting back to what he perceives his life really to be about, that being writing and the completion of *Madera de boj* [Boxwood], the novel that was interrupted with the «Nobel business».

The University of South Carolina

LUCILE C. CHARLEBOIS

J. M. Caparrós Lera. *El cine español de la democracia: De la muerte de Franco al "cambio" socialista (1975-1989)*. Barcelona, Anthropos, 1992, 446 p.

La obra del profesor Caparrós Lera, editor de la conocida revista *Film-Historia* y presidente del Centro de Investigaciones Cine-